THE
CASE OF THE ALLIES

BEING THE REPLIES TO
PRESIDENT WILSON, AND
MR. BALFOUR'S DESPATCH.

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THE CASE OF THE ALLIES.

The Reply of the Allies to the American Note.

1. The Allied Governments have received the Note handed to them on the 19th December, 1916, by the Government of the United States. They have considered it with the care due both to their own keen sense of the gravity of the present time, and to the sincere friendship which unites them to the American people.

2. In a general way, they desire to declare their respect for the lofty sentiments inspiring the American Note and their whole-hearted agreement with the proposal to create a league of nations which shall assure peace and justice throughout the world. They recognise all the benefits which will accrue to the cause of humanity and civilisation from the institution of international arrangements designed to prevent violent conflicts between nations, and so framed as to provide the sanctions necessary to their enforcement, lest an illusory security should serve merely to facilitate fresh acts of aggression.

3. But a discussion of future arrangements for assuring a durable peace presupposes a satisfactory

settlement of the present conflict. The Allies cherish a desire as deep as that of the Government of the United States to see an end put as soon as possible to the war for which the Central Empires are responsible, and which inflicts such cruel sufferings upon humanity. But in their judgment it is impossible to obtain at this moment such a peace as will not only secure to them the reparation, the restitution, and the guarantees justly due to them by reason of the act of aggression, the guilt of which is fixed upon the Central Powers, while the very principle from which it sprang was undermining the safety of Europe; and at the same time such a peace as will enable the future of the European nations to be established upon a sure foundation. The Allied nations are convinced that they are not fighting for selfish interests, but above all to provide safeguards for the independence of peoples, for law and for humanity.

4. The Allies are fully conscious of the losses and suffering entailed by war on neutrals, as well as on belligerents. They regret them, but cannot consider themselves responsible for them, as they in no way either desired or provoked this war; they are doing all in their power to reduce in every possible way the damage occasioned by it, so far as they can do so under the inexorable pressure of providing for their own defence against the violence and devices of the enemy.

5. They note with satisfaction the declaration made to them that the American communication is not in any way connected in its origin with that of the Central Powers, transmitted to them on December 18th by the Government of the United

States. Indeed, they did not doubt the determination of that Government to avoid any appearance of giving even moral support to the responsible authors of the war.

6. The Allied Governments feel it their duty to challenge in the most friendly, but also in the clearest way, the analogy drawn between the two groups of belligerents. This analogy, based on the public declarations of the Central Powers, is in direct conflict with the evidence, both as regards responsibility for the past and guarantees for the future. President Wilson, in alluding to this analogy, did not of course intend to adopt it as his own.

7. If any fact of history is clearly established to-day, it is the calculated policy of aggression by which Germany and Austria-Hungary sought to ensure their hegemony of Europe and their economic domination over the world. By her declaration of war, by the instant violation of Belgium and Luxemburg, and by her methods of warfare, Germany has proved that she systematically scorns every principle of humanity and all respect due to small States. More and more as the struggle has progressed has the attitude of the Central Powers and their Allies been a constant challenge to humanity and civilisation. Is it necessary to recall the horrors that marked the invasion of Belgium and of Serbia, the atrocious treatment undergone by the invaded countries, the massacres of hundreds of thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities inflicted upon the peoples of Syria, the raids of Zeppelins upon open towns, the destruction by submarines of pas-

senger liners and merchant vessels, even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted on prisoners of war, the judicial murders of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt, the deportation and enslavement of civil populations, etc.? The perpetration of such a catalogue of crimes regardless of the reprobation of mankind will surely explain to President Wilson the protest which the Allies here make.

8. They consider that the Note which they have handed to the United States in reply to the German Note answers the question put by the American Government, and constitutes in their own words a public "avowal of their views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded." But President Wilson expressed a further wish: he desires the belligerent Powers to state in the full light of day the aims they have set themselves in prosecuting the war. The Allies find no difficulty in meeting this request. Their aims in this war are well known, for they have been repeatedly expressed by the heads of their several Governments. These aims can only be formulated in detail, with all the just compensations and indemnities due for the losses suffered, when the moment for negotiation arrives. But the civilised world knows that they include, primarily and of necessity, the restoration of Belgium, of Serbia, and of Montenegro, with the compensations due to them; the evacuation of the invaded territories in France, Russia, and Roumania with fitting reparation; the reorganisation of Europe, guaranteed by a stable settlement, based alike upon the principle of nationalities, on the right

which all peoples, whether small or great, have to the enjoyment of full security and free economic development, and also upon territorial agreements and international arrangements so framed as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjust attacks; the restitution of provinces or territories formerly torn from the Allies by force or contrary to the wishes of their inhabitants; the liberation of Italians, Slavs, Roumanians, Czechs, and Slovaks from foreign domination; the liberation of the peoples who now lie beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks and the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which has proved itself so radically alien to Western civilisation.

9. The intentions of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia in regard to Poland have been clearly shown in the proclamation which he has just addressed to his armies.

10. It is hardly necessary to add that, while it is the wish of the Allies to rescue Europe from the brutal encroachments of Prussian militarism, it has never been their intention, as has been alleged, to seek the extermination or the political extinction of the Germanic peoples. The chief aim of the Allies is to assure peace on those principles of liberty, justice, and inviolable fidelity to international obligations, which have never ceased to inspire the action of the United States.

With this high end in view, the Allied Governments are each and all determined to put forth all their strength and to endure every sacrifice in order that they may press to a victorious close a conflict on which, they are convinced, de-

pend not only their own safety and prosperity, but the very future of civilisation.

The Belgian Reply.

The Royal Government, which has associated itself with the Reply handed by the French Prime Minister to the Ambassador of the United States, desires particularly to express its sense of the sentiments of humanity that have prompted the President of the United States in addressing his Note to the belligerent Powers, and it highly appreciates the friendship towards Belgium which he interprets with such good will.

As much as Mr. Woodrow Wilson, the Royal Government would wish to see this war come to an end as soon as possible.

But the President seems to think that the statesmen in the two hostile camps are pursuing the same war aims. The example of Belgium unhappily demonstrates that this is not the case. Unlike the Central Powers, Belgium has never aimed at conquest. The barbarous manner in which the German Government has treated and still treats the Belgian nation does not admit of any supposition that Germany will make it her care to guarantee for the future the rights of weak peoples which she has not ceased to trample under foot ever since the war that she let loose began to ravage Europe.

On the other hand, the Royal Government notes with pleasure and with confidence the assurance that the United States impatiently await the moment to co-operate in the measures which will be taken, after peace, to protect and guarantee small nations against violence and oppression.

Until Germany delivered her ultimatum, Belgium's sole aspiration was to live on good terms with all her neighbours; towards each of them she discharged with scrupulous loyalty the obligations imposed on her by her neutrality. How was she rewarded by Germany for the confidence she showed? Overnight, without plausible warrant, her neutrality was violated, her territory was invaded, and the Imperial Chancellor, in announcing to the Reichstag this violation of right and of treaty, was compelled to admit the iniquity of such an act and to promise that reparation would be made. But the Germans, after occupying Belgian territory, showed themselves no more observant of the rules of international law or of the provisions of The Hague Conventions. They exhausted the resources of the country by exactions as heavy as they were arbitrary; they deliberately ruined its industries, destroyed whole towns, and put to death or imprisoned a considerable number of inhabitants. Even now, while they loudly proclaim their desire to put an end to the horrors of the war, they aggravate the rigours of the occupation by carrying Belgian workmen into slavery by thousands.

If there is a country that is entitled to say that it took up arms in order to defend its existence, that country assuredly is Belgium. Compelled by force to fight or to submit to dishonour, she passionately desires that an end may be set to the unheard-of sufferings of her population. But she could accept only a peace that assures to her, together with equitable reparation, securities and guarantees for the future.

The American people have, since the beginning

of the war, manifested towards the oppressed Belgian people their most ardent sympathy. An American committee, the "Commission for Relief in Belgium," in intimate co-operation with the King's Government and with the National Committee, is displaying tireless devotion and marvellous activity in supplying the needs of Belgium. The Royal Government is happy to seize this opportunity of expressing its profound gratitude to the "Commission for Relief" and to the generous Americans who are so eagerly bent on relieving the miseries of the Belgian population. Nowhere, moreover, have the raiding and deportation of Belgian civilians provoked a more spontaneous outburst of protest and of indignant reprobation than in the United States.

These facts, which are all to the honour of the American people, inspire the Royal Government with the legitimate hope that, at the final settlement of this long war, the voice of the Entente Powers will find in the United States a unanimous echo to claim for Belgium, the innocent victim of German ambition and of German greed, the rank and position that are marked out for her among the civilised nations, by virtue of her blameless past, by the valour of her soldiers, by her fidelity to honour, and by her people's remarkable aptitude for work.

Paris, January 10th, 1917.

Mr. Balfour's Despatch.

SIR,—In sending you a translation of the Allied Note, I desire to make the following observations which you should bring to the notice of the United States Government.

I gather from the general tenor of the President's Note that, while he is animated by an intense desire that peace should come soon, and that when it comes it should be lasting, he does not, for the moment at least, concern himself with the terms on which it should be arranged. His Majesty's Government entirely share the President's ideals; but they feel strongly that the durability of the peace must largely depend on its character, and that no stable system of international relations can be built on foundations which are essentially and hopelessly defective.

This becomes clearly apparent if we consider the main conditions which rendered possible the calamities from which the world is now suffering. These were the existence of a Great Power consumed with the lust of domination, in the midst of a community of nations ill-prepared for defence, plentifully supplied, indeed, with international laws, but with no machinery for enforcing them, and weakened by the fact that neither the boundaries of the various States nor their internal constitution harmonised with the aspirations of their constituent races, or secured to them just and equal treatment.

That this last evil would be greatly mitigated if the Allies secured the changes in the map of Europe outlined in their joint Note is manifest, and I need not labour the point.

It has been argued, indeed, that the expulsion of the Turks from Europe forms no proper or logical part of this general scheme. The maintenance of the Turkish Empire was, during many generations, regarded by statesmen of world-wide

authority as essential to the maintenance of European peace. Why, it is asked, should the cause of peace be now associated with a complete reversal of this traditional policy?

The answer is that circumstances have completely changed. It is unnecessary to consider now whether the creation of a reformed Turkey mediating between hostile races in the Near East was a scheme which, had the Sultan been sincere and the Powers united, could ever have been realised. It certainly cannot be realised now. The Turkey of "Union and Progress" is at least as barbarous, and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Sultan Abdul Hamid. In the hands of Germany it has ceased even in appearance to be a bulwark of peace, and is openly used as an instrument of conquest. Under German officers, Turkish soldiers are now fighting in lands from which they had long been expelled; and a Turkish Government, controlled, subsidised, and supported by Germany, has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history even of those unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall, if possible, be brought to an end; and we may hope that the expulsion of Turkey from Europe will contribute as much to the cause of peace as the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, of Italia Irredenta to Italy, or any of the other territorial changes indicated in the Allied Note.

Evidently, however, such territorial rearrangements, though they may diminish the occasions of

war, provide no sufficient security against its recurrence. If Germany, or, rather, those in Germany who mould its opinions and control its destinies, again set out to dominate the world, they may find that by the new order of things the adventure is made more difficult, but hardly that it is made impossible. They may still have ready to their hand a political system organised through and through on a military basis; they may still accumulate vast stores of military equipment; they may still perfect their methods of attack, so that their more pacific neighbours will be struck down before they can prepare themselves for defence. If so, Europe when the war is over will be far poorer in men, in money, and in mutual goodwill than it was when the war began, but it will not be safer; and the hopes for the future of the world entertained by the President will be as far as ever from fulfilment.

There are those who think that, for this disease, international treaties and international laws may provide a sufficient cure. But such persons have ill-learned the lessons so clearly taught by recent history. While other nations, notably the United States of America and Britain, were striving by treaties of arbitration to make sure that no chance quarrel should mar the peace they desired to make perpetual, Germany stood aloof. Her historians and philosophers preached the splendours of war: Power was proclaimed as the true end of the State; the General Staff forged with untiring industry the weapons by which, at the appointed moment, Power might be achieved. These facts proved clearly enough that treaty arrangements for maintaining peace were not likely to find much favour at Berlin;

they did not prove that such treaties, once made, would be utterly ineffectual. This became evident only when war had broken out; though the demonstration, when it came, was overwhelming. So long as Germany remains the Germany which, without a shadow of justification, over-ran and barbarously ill-treated a country it was pledged to defend, no State can regard its rights as secure if they have no better protection than a solemn treaty.

The case is made worse by the reflection that these methods of calculated brutality were designed by the Central Powers not merely to crush to the dust those with whom they were at war, but to intimidate those with whom they were still at peace. Belgium was not only a victim—it was an example. Neutrals were intended to note the outrages which accompanied its conquest, the reign of terror which followed on its occupation, the deportation of a portion of its population, the cruel oppression of the remainder. And lest nations happily protected, either by British fleets or by their own, from German armies should suppose themselves safe from German methods, the submarine has (within its limits) assiduously imitated the barbaric practices of the sister service. The War Staffs of the Central Powers are well content to horrify the world if at the same time they can terrorise it.

If, then, the Central Powers succeed, it will be to methods like these that they will owe their success. How can any reform of international relations be based on a peace thus obtained? Such a peace would represent the triumph of all the forces which make war certain and make it brutal.

It would advertise the futility of all the methods on which civilisation relies to eliminate the occasions of international dispute and to mitigate their ferocity.

Germany and Austria made the present war inevitable by attacking the rights of one small State, and they gained their initial triumphs by violating the treaty-guarded territories of another. Are small States going to find in them their future protectors, or in treaties made by them a bulwark against aggression? Terrorism by land and sea will have proved itself the instrument of victory. Are the victors likely to abandon it on the appeal of the neutrals? If existing treaties are no more than scraps of paper, can fresh treaties help us? If the violation of the most fundamental canons of international law be crowned with success, will it not be in vain that the assembled nations labour to improve their code? None will profit by their rules but the criminals who break them. It is those who keep them that will suffer.

Though, therefore, the people of this country share to the full the desire of the President for peace, they do not believe that peace can be durable if it be not based on the success of the Allied cause. For a durable peace can hardly be expected unless three conditions are fulfilled. The first is that the existing causes of international unrest should be, as far as possible, removed or weakened. The second is that the aggressive aims and the unscrupulous methods of the Central Powers should fall into disrepute among their own peoples. The third is that behind international law, and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities,

some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardiest aggressor. These conditions may be difficult of fulfilment. But we believe them to be in general harmony with the President's ideals, and we are confident that none of them can be satisfied, even imperfectly, unless peace be secured on the general lines indicated (so far as Europe is concerned) in the Joint Note. Therefore it is that this country has made, is making, and is prepared to make sacrifices of blood and treasure unparalleled in its history. It bears these heavy burdens not merely that it may thus fulfil its treaty obligations, nor yet that it may secure a barren triumph of one group of nations over another. It bears them because it firmly believes that on the success of the Allies depend the prospects of peaceful civilisation and of those international reforms which the best thinkers of the New World, as of the Old, dare to hope may follow on the cessation of our present calamities.

I am, with great truth and respect, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

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